The Chalice of Courage

Being the Story of Certain Persons Who Drank of it and Conquered

A Romance of Colorado

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SYNOPSIS.

Enid Maitland, a frank, free and unspoiled young Philadelphia girl, is taken to the Colorado mountains by her uncle, Robert Maitland. James Armstrong, Maitland's protege, falls in love with her. His persistent wooing thrills the girl, but she hesitates, and Armstrong goes east on business without a definite answer. Enid hears the story of a mining engineer, Newbold, whose wife fell off a cliff and was so seriously hurt that he was compelled to shoot her to prevent her being eaten by wolves while he went for help. Kirkby, the old guide who tells the story, gives Enid a package of letters which he says were found on the dead woman's body. She reads the letters and at Kirkby's request keeps them. While bathing in mountain stream Enid is attacked by a bear, which is mysteriously shot. A storm adds to the girl's terror. A sudden deluge transforms brook into raging torrent, which sweeps Enid into gorge, where she is rescued by a mountain hermit after a thrilling experience. Campers in great confusion upon discovering Enid's absence when the storm breaks. Maitland and Old Kirkby go in search of the girl. Enid discovers that her ankle is sprained and that she is unable to walk. Her mysterious rescuer carries her to his camp. Enid goes to sleep in the strange man's bunk. Miner cooks breakfast for Enid, after which they go on tour of inspection. The hermit tells Enid of his unsuccessful attempt to find the Maitland campers. He admits that he is also from Philadelphia. The hermit falls in love with Enid. The man comes to a realization of his love for her, but naturally in that strange solitude the relations of the girl and her rescuer become unnatural and strained. The stranger tells of a wife he had who is dead, and says he has sworn to ever cherish her memory by living in solitude. He and Enid, however, confess their love for each other. She learns that he is the man who killed his wife in the mountain. Enid discovers the writer of the letters to Newbold's wife to have been James Armstrong. Newbold decides to start to the settlement for help. The man is racked by the belief that he is unfaithful to his wife's memory, and Enid is tempted to tell him of the letters in her possession. Armstrong, accompanied by Kirkby and Robert Maitland, find a note that Newbold had left in the deserted cabin, and know that the girl is in his keeping.

CHAPTER XIX—(Continued).

Not altogether admirable had been James Armstrong's outwardly successful career. In much that is high and noble and manly his actions—and his character—had often been lacking, but even the base can love, and sometimes love transforms, if it be given a chance. The passion of Cymon for Iphigenia, made a man and prince out of the rustic boor, and his real love for Enid Maitland might have done more for Armstrong than he himself or anyone who knew him as he was, and few there were who had such knowledge of him, dreamed was possible. There was one thing that love could not do, however; it could not make him a patient philosopher, a good waiter. His rule of life was not very high, but in one way it was admirable, in that prompt, bold desire action was his chiefest characteristic.

On this certain morning a month after the heart-breaking disaster, his power of passive endurance had been strained to the vanishing point. The great white range was flung in his face like a challenge. Within its secret recesses lay the solution of the mystery. Somewhere, dead or alive, beyond the soaring rampart was the woman he loved. It was impossible for him to remain quiet any longer. Common sense, reason, every argument that had been adduced, suddenly became of no weight. He lifted his head and stared straight westward, his eyes swept the long semicircle of horizon across which the mighty range was drawn like the chord of gigantic arc or the string of a mighty bow. Each white peak mocked him, the insolent aggression of the range called him irresistibly to action.

"By Heaven," he said under his breath, rising to his feet, "winter or no winter, I go."

Robert Maitland had offices in the same building. Having once come to a determination, there was no more uncertainty or hesitation about Armstrong's course. In another moment he was standing in the private room of his friend. The two men were not alone there. Stephen Maitland sat in a low chair before another window removed from the desk somewhat, staring out at the range. The old man was huddled down in his seat, every line of his figure spoke of grief and despair. Of all the places in Denver, he liked best his brother's office fronting the rampart of the mountains, and hour after hour he sat there quietly looking at the summits, sometimes softly shrouded in white, sometimes swept bare by the fierce winter gales that blew across them, sometimes shining and sparkling so that the eye scarce sustain their reflection of the dazzling sun of Colorado; and at other times seen dimly through mists of whirling snow.

Oh, yes, the mountains challenged him also to the other side of the range. His heart yearned for his child, but he was too old to make the attempt. He could only sit and pray and wait with such faint and fading hope as he could still cherish until the break up of the spring came. For the rest he troubled nobody; nobody noticed him, nobody marked him, nobody minded him. Robert Maitland transacted his business a little more softly, a little more gently, that was all. Yet the presence of his brother was a living grief and a living reproach to him. Although he was quite blameless he blamed himself. He had not known how he had grown to love his niece until he had lost her. His conscience accused him hourly, and yet he knew not where he was at fault or how he could have done differently. It was a helpless and hopeless situation. To him, therefore, entered Armstrong.

"Maitland," he began, "I can't stand it any longer. I'm going into the mountains."

"You are mad!"

"I can't help it. I can't sit here and face them, damn them, and remain quiet."

"You will never come out alive."

"Oh, yes, I will; but if I don't, I swear to God I don't care."

Old Stephen Maitland rose unsteadily to his feet and gripped the back of his chair.

"Did I hear aright, sir?" he asked, with all the polished and graceful courtesy of birth and breeding which never deserted him in any emergency whatsoever. "Do you say—"

"I said I was going into the mountains to search for her."

"It is madness," urged Robert Maitland.

But the old man did not hear him.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed with deep feeling. "I have sat here day after day and watched those mighty hills, and I have said to myself that if I had youth and strength as I have love, I would not wait."

"You are right," returned Armstrong, equally moved, and indeed it would have been hard to have heard and seen that father unresponsively; "and I am not going to wait, either."

"I understand your feelings, Jim, and yours, too, Steve," began Robert Maitland, arguing against his own emotions, "even if she escaped the flood, she must be dead by this time."

"You needn't go over the old argument, Bob. I'm going into the mountains, and I'm going now. No," he continued swiftly, as the other opened his mouth to interpose further objections, "you needn't say another word. I'm a free agent, and I'm old enough to decide what I can do. There is no argument, there is no force, there is no appeal, there is nothing that will restrain me. I can't sit here and eat my heart out when she may be there."

"But it's impossible!"

"It is impossible. How do I know that there may not have been somebody in the mountains; she may have wandered to some settlement, some hunter's cabin, some prospector's hut."

"But we were there for weeks and saw nothing, no evidence of her sanity."

"I don't care. The mountains are filled with secret nooks you could pass by within a stone's throw, and never see into; she may be in one of them. I suppose she is dead, and it's all foolish, this hope; but I'll never believe it until I have examined every square rod within a radius of 50 miles from your camp. I'll take the long chance, the longest, even."

"Well, that's all right," said Robert Maitland. "Of course, I intend to do that as soon as the spring opens; but what's the use of trying to do it now?"

"It's use to me. I'll either go mad here in Denver, or I must go to seek for her there."

"But you will never come back if you once get in those mountains alone."

"I don't care whether I do or not. It's no use, old man, I am going, and that's all there is about it."

Robert Maitland knew men. He recognized finality when he heard it, or when he saw it, and it was quite evident that he was in the presence of it then. It was no use to say more.

"Very well," he said. "I honor you for your feeling, even if I don't think much of your common sense."

"Damn common sense," cried Armstrong, triumphantly. "It's love that moves me now."

At that moment there was a tap on the door. A clerk from the outer office bidden to enter, announced that old Kirkby was in the ante room.

"Bring him in," directed Maitland, eager to welcome him.

He fancied that the newcomer would undoubtedly assist him in dissuading Armstrong from his foolhardy, useless enterprise.

"Mornin', old man," drawled Kirkby. "Howdy, Armstrong, my respects to you, sir," he said, sinking his voice a little as he bowed respectfully toward Mr. Stephen Maitland, a very sympathetic look in the old frontiersman's eyes at the sight of the bereaved father.

"Kirkby, you've come in the very nick of time," at once began Robert Maitland.

"Allus glad to be Johnny-on-the-spot," smiled the older man.

"Armstrong here," continued the other, intent upon his purpose, "says he can't wait until the spring and the snow melt, he is going into the mountains now to look for Enid."

Kirkby didn't love Armstrong. He didn't care for him a little bit, but there was something in the bold hardihood of the man, something in the way which he met the reckless challenge of the mountains that the old man and all the others felt that moved the inmost soul of the hardy frontiersman. He threw an approving glance at him.

"I tell him that it is absurd, impossible, that he risks his life for nothing, and I want you to tell him the same thing. You know more about the mountains than either of us."

"Mr. Kirkby," quavered Stephen Maitland, "allow me. I don't want to influence you against your better judgment, but if you could sit here as I have done, and think that maybe she is there, and perhaps alive still, and in need, you would not say a word to deter him."

"Why, Steve," expostulated Robert Maitland, "surely you know I would risk anything for Enid. Somehow, it seems as if I were being put in the selfish position by my opposition."

"No, no," said his brother. "It isn't that. You have your wife and children, but this young man—"

"Well, what do you say, Kirkby? Not that it makes any difference to me what anybody says. Come, we are wasting time," interposed Armstrong, who, now that he had made up his mind, was anxious to be off.

"Jim Armstrong," answered Kirkby, decidedly. "I never thought much o' you in the past, an' I think sence you've put out this last projick of yourn, that I'm entitled to call you a damn fool, w'ich you are, and I'm another, for I'm goin' into the mountains with you."

"It is Madness," Urged Robert Maitland.

"I'm Goin' Into the Mountains With You."

"Oh, thank God!" cried Stephen Maitland fervently.

"I know you don't like me," answered Armstrong. "That's neither here nor there. Perhaps you have cause to dislike me, perhaps you have not. I don't like you any too well myself, but there's no man on earth I'd rather have go with me on a quest of this kind than you, and there's my hand on it."

Kirby shook it vigorously.

"This ain't committin' myself," he said cautiously. "So far's I'm concerned, you ain't good enough for Miss Maitland, but I admires your spirit, Armstrong, an' I'm goin' with you. 'Tain't no good, 'twon't produce nothin', most likely we'll never come back agin; but jest the same, I'm goin' along. Nobody's goin' to show me the trail. My nerve and grit, w'en it comes to helpin' a young female like that girl, is as good as anybody's, I guess. You're her father," he drawled, on turning to Stephen Maitland, "an' I ain't no kin to her, but, by gosh, I believe I can understand better than any one else yere what you are feelin'."

"Kirkby," said Robert Maitland, smiling at the other two, "you have gone clean back on me. I thought you had more sense. But somehow I guess it's contagious, for I am going along with you two myself."

"And I, cannot I accompany you?" pleaded Stephen Maitland, eagerly drawing near to the other three.

"Not much," said old Kirkby promptly. "You ain't got the stren'th, ol' man. You don't know them mountains, nuther. You'd be helpless on a pair o' snow shoes; there ain't anything you could do, you'd jest be a drag on us. Without sayin' anything about myself, w'ich I'm too modest for that, there ain't three better men in Colorado to tackle this job than Jim Armstrong an' Bob Maitland an'— Well, as I said, I won't mention no other names."

"God bless you all, gentlemen," faltered Stephen Maitland. "I think, perhaps, I may have been wrong, a little prejudiced against the west. You are men that would do honor to any family, to any society in Philadelphia or anywhere else."

"Lord love ye," drawled Kirkby, his eyes twinkling. "There ain't no three men on the Atlantic seaboard that kin match up with two of us yere, to say nothin' of the third."

"Well," said Robert Maitland, "the thing now is to decide on what's to be done."

"My plan," said Armstrong, "is to go to the old camp.

"Yep," said Kirkby, "that's a good point of deeparture, as my seafarin' father down Cape Cod way used to say; an' wot's next?"

"I am going up the canon instead of down," said the man, with a flash of inspiration.

"That ain't no bad idea, nuther," assented the old man. "We looked the ground over pretty thoroughly down the canon. Mebbe we can find something up it."

"And what do you propose to take with you?" asked Maitland.

"What we can carry on the backs of men. We will make a camp somewhere about where you did. We can get enough husky men up at Morrison who will pack in what we want, and with that as a basis we will explore the upper reaches of the range."

"And when do we start?"

"There is a train for Morrison in two hours," answered Armstrong. "We can get what we want in the way of sleeping bags and equipment between now and then, if we hurry about it."

"Ef we are goin' to do it, we might as well git a move on us," assented Kirkby, making ready to go.

"Right," answered Robert Maitland grimly. "When three men set out to make fools of themselves, the sooner they get at it and get over with it the better. I've got some business matters to settle. You two get what's needed, and I'll bear my share."

A week later a little band of men on snow shoes, wrapped in furs to their eyes, every one heavily burdened with a pack, staggered into the clearing where once had been pitched the Maitland camp. The place was covered with snow, of course, but on a shelf of rock half way up the hogback, they found a comparatively level clearing, and there, all working like beavers, they built a rude hut which they covered with canvas and then with tightly packed snow, and which would keep the three who remained from freezing to death. Fortunately they were favored with a brief period of pleasant weather, and a few days served to make a sufficiently habitable camp. Maitland, Kirkby and Armstrong worked with the rest. There was no thought of search at first; their lives depended upon the erection of a suitable shelter, and it was not until the helpers, leaving their burdens behind them, had departed, that the three men even considered what was to be done next.

"We must begin a systematic search tomorrow," said Armstrong decisively, as the three men sat around the cheerful fire in the hut.

"Yes," assented Maitland. "Shall we go together, or separately?"

"Separately, of course. We are all hardy and experienced men. Nothing is apt to happen to us. We will meet here every night and plan the next day's work. What do you say, Kirkby?"

The old man had been quietly smoking while the others talked. He smiled at them in a way which aroused their curiosity and made them feel that he had news for them.

"While you was puttin' the finishin' touches on this yere camp, I come acrost a heap o' stuns that somehow the wind had swept bare, there was a big rift in front of it which kep' us from seein' it afore; it was built up in the open w'ere there was no trees, an' in our lumberin' operations we wasn't lookin' that a-way. I came acrost it by any chance an—"

"Well, for God's sake, old man," cried Armstrong, impatiently, "what did you find, anything?"

"This," answered Kirkby, carefully producing a folded scrap of paper from his leather vest.

Armstrong fell on it ravenously, and as Maitland bent to him, they both read these words by the firelight.

"Miss Enid Maitland, whose foot is so badly crushed as to prevent her traveling, is safe in a cabin at the head of this canon. I put this notice here to reassure any one who may be seeking her as to her welfare. Follow the stream up to its source.

"WM. BERKELY NEWBOLD."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Robert Maitland.

"You called me a fool, Kirkby," said Armstrong, his eyes gleaming. "What do you think of it now?"

"It's the fools, I find," said Kirkby sapiently, "that gener'ly gits there. Providence seems to be a-watchin' over 'em."

"You said you chanced on this paper, Jack," continued Maitland. "It looks like the deliberate intention of Almighty God."

"I reckon so," answered the other, simply. "You see He's got to look after all the fools on earth to keep 'em from doin' too much damage to themselves an' to others in this yere crooked trail of a world."

"Let us start now," urged Armstrong.

"'Tain't possible," said the old man, taking another puff at his pipe, and only a glistening of the eye betrayed the joy that he felt; otherwise his phlegmatic calm was unbroken, his demeanor just as undisturbed as it always was. "We'd jest throw away our lives a-wanderin' round these yere mountains in the dark. We've got to have light, an clear weather. Ef it should be snowin' in the mornin' we'd have to wait until it cleared."

"I won't wait a minute," said Armstrong. "At daybreak, weather or no weather, I start."

"What's your hurry, Jim?" continued Kirkby, calmly. "The gal's safe; one day more or less ain't goin' to make no difference."

"She's with another man," answered Armstrong quickly.

"Do you know this Newbold?" asked Maitland, looking at the note again.

"No, not personally, but I have heard of him."

"I know him," answered Kirkby quickly, "an' you've seed him too, Bob; he's the feller that shot his wife, that married Louise Rosser."

"That man!"

"The very same."

"You say you never saw him, Jim?" asked Maitland.

"I repeat I never met him," said Armstrong, flushing suddenly; "but I knew him wife."

"Yes, you did that—" drawled the old mountaineer.

"What do you mean?" flushed Armstrong.

"I mean that you knowed her, that's all," answered the old man with an innocent air that was almost childlike.

When the others woke up in the morning Armstrong's sleeping bag was empty. Kirkby crawled out of his own warm nest, opened the door and peered out into the storm.

"Well," he said, "I guess the damn fool has beat God this time. It don't look to me as if even He could save him now."

"But we must go after him at once," urged Maitland.

"See for yourself," answered the old man, throwing wider the door. "We've got to wait 'til this wind dies down, unless we give the Almighty the job o' lookin' after three instid o' one."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Woman and her Will.

"In how many states can women make their wills?" "In most of 'em they come with it ready made."—Baltimore American.

Its Kind.

"The papers say carrots will make one beautiful."

"Huh! That's only yellow journalism."

Liquid Measure.

It was the time of the singing lesson at the local council school, and the teacher was explaining to the young hopefuls that if a "treble," and "alto," a "tenor" and a "bass" sung together, their united efforts would constitute a quartet.

There seemed no trouble about that, and the teacher thought the class was getting on very nicely.

"Now, Jimmy, leave off pinching your brother's leg and listen to me," said she. 'If a bass and a tenor sang together, what would you call that?"

Jimmy was the son of the local milkman, and a bright lad withal. His answer was not long in coming.

"Please, miss," said he, "that would be a 'pintette.'"

USUALLY THE CASE.

Wickson—I have been working night and day for the last month.

Dickson—Because why?

Wickson—In order to get enough money ahead to pay for a week's rest in the country this summer.

Demijohn Lamps.

A couple of old wicker covered demijohns are going to do duty this summer in a seashore bungalow as the bases of lamps. One of them received only a thorough cleaning before being pressed into service, the other was treated to a coat of brown enamel paint. On the light one has been fitted a spreading wicker shade, and on the brown one a Japanese openwork shade lined with yellow flowered chintz. The latter will stand in the family sitting room, which is done in brown and buff, and the former will illumine the veranda from a wicker table at the window, to which the electric light cord can be extended. Both demijohns, of course will be weighted so that they can not topple over easily—New York Tribune.

Matter of Skill.

"Does your wife ever object when you find it necessary to stay down town late at night?" "Oh, no, she knows that I never stay away from home in the evening unless it is a matter of business that keeps me. Does your wife make a fuss when you get home late?" "Always. I congratulate you." "Thanks, old man. Yes, I think I'm to be congratulated. My wife's a mighty sensible little woman, even if she isn't as beautiful as some who could be mentioned. Give me an amiable, reasonable woman rather than a pretty one, who can't listen to reason." "It isn't the amiability of your wife that causes me to offer my congratulations." "No? What, then?" "Your ability as a liar."

Directors Children's Museum.

Miss Sarah L. Arnold, dean of Simmons college, Boston, and Miss Mary C. Mellyn, supervisor of substitutes of the public schools of Boston, have been elected members of the board of directors for the new Children's Museum of Boston. This museum will be built and conducted along the lines of the children's museum in Brooklyn. The latter institution has an annual income of $13,000 from the appropriation made by the city to the Brooklyn institute museum. Departments relating to botany, art, geography, geology, zoology, history, and physics will be arranged for the especial benefit of children in the Boston museum. They will make a specialty of the work of wireless telegraphy.

Scientific Advance.

Dr. Coarns of the Heidelburg institute for the study of cancer has succeeded in obtaining experimental evidence of the radio activity of various human organs. Experiments were made by allowing the organic matter to act, through a wire grating, on a photographic plate wrapped in black paper. Faint radiographs were obtained by twenty-four hours' exposure, the strongest action being exerted by the substance of the brain.

Forbearance Unrewarded.

"You should be slow to anger!" said the colored youth's employer.

"Dat's what I were," was the disconsolate answer. "I were so slow to anger dat he done had me whup befo' I knowed de fight was stahted!"